



AGRICULTURE FUTURE OF AMERICA | IMPACT REPORT
2026 BUILDING BRIDGES



“AFA is an opportunity that can not be missed. The connections and meaningful relationships built are lasting and lead to real pathways for success. ”

Campbell Bednar, Texas Tech University

CONSERVATION
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CROWN CENTER
EXHIBIT HALL





“AFA exhibits a strong culture of inclusion and belonging that is important for our next generation of leaders.”

**Deacue Fields, Vice President of Agriculture
University of Arkansas Division of Agriculture**

HI FRIENDS,

As we celebrate 30 years of Agriculture Future of America, I am filled with gratitude for the people who have built, supported and carried this mission forward. AFA is a bridge between students, industry, campuses and alumni who believe the future of agriculture depends on bold, prepared and connected leaders.

This year's impact reflects the strength of that shared commitment. To our industry partners, thank you for investing in the talent pipeline, opening doors and helping us stay aligned with the evolving needs of agriculture. To our students, thank you for showing up with curiosity, purpose and a willingness to lead. To our Campus Champions, thank you for extending AFA's reach and helping students find opportunities that can shape their futures. To our alumni, thank you for continuing to engage, mentor, give back and nourish the lifelong community of AFA.

As we look ahead, our vision is ambitious: by 2040, every college student in the United States will have access to AFA resources and opportunities. We are expanding our reach, strengthening our programs, embracing responsible innovation and becoming the go-to source for career enhancement for professionals and alumni throughout their lifelong journeys.

The bridge to the next 30 years is being built today by every partner, student, educator, volunteer, donor and alum who believes in this work. Thank you for helping AFA grow leaders who are ready to meet the moment and shape what comes next.


Mark Stewart
CEO





“You are able to connect and become a stronger leader and learn more about who you are and who you want to be.”

Paycen Rogers, Murray State University

What We Do.

AFA connects high-potential students with industry leaders to strengthen the agriculture talent pipeline nationwide.

1,324

TOTAL STUDENT ENGAGEMENTS

938

TOTAL INDUSTRY ENGAGEMENTS

114

PARTNER ORGANIZATIONS

49

STATES REPRESENTED + PUERTO RICO

AFA is strengthening the agriculture workforce from campus to career.

MORE THAN

79%

OF ALUMNI ARE IN
AG-RELATED CAREERS



AFA enhances career potential and growth through numerous experiences from college students to industry professionals.

How We Do It.

LEADER EXPERIENCES

Through immersive, hands-on experiences, AFA-designed programs give students the opportunity to explore key sectors of the agriculture industry, connect with peers and professionals from across the country and discover where their skills and passion can make the greatest impact.

71 Hands-on and
Immersive Leadership
& Career Tours

ALUMNI ENGAGEMENT

At AFA, leadership development doesn't end with a diploma, it evolves into a lifelong journey. Participation in any AFA experience grants automatic admission into the Alliance Alumni Network, connecting to agricultural thought leaders, change agents and innovators shaping the future of food, agriculture and natural resources.

Did you ever attend any AFA event as a student? If so, then you are a member of the AFA Alliance. No fees, no membership, just growing relationships.

1,324 Total Students
Impacted by Leader
Experiences in 2025

10,077 Members of
the Alliance
Alumni Network



Every AFA experience is built around six Leader Competencies designed to close critical gaps in the talent pipeline.

Relationship Development



Building and fostering healthy relationships.

Career Management



Using exploration to manage you and your teams.

Cultural EQ



The capacity to perform across diverse environments with an inclusive bias.

Collaboration



The ability to work effectively with others toward a common goal.

Systems Thinking



The ability to innovate and influence systems through critical thinking and problem solving.

Interpersonal IQ



The ability to relate with sensitivity and influence. A built-in bias toward leading and learning.

“I care deeply about ensuring that American agriculture thrives. AFA offers me the opportunity to engage with, support and mentor young adults already on promising educational and professional pathways.”

Rebeckah Adcock, Chief Government Relations Officer, Feeding America



CHS

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Today, I
my pass
to work
the field

• Kylene M...
Agency...

• V...

An internship with a purpose

Aquila
The Ohio State University



AFA enhances the talent pipeline by providing everyone with an interest in agriculture a seat at the table.

Who We Serve.

AFA is committed to creating programs where diverse perspectives, backgrounds and experiences are not only welcomed, but recognized as essential to the future of food and agriculture. By expanding access, building inclusive learning environments and connecting students to meaningful industry relationships, AFA helps strengthen the talent pipeline and open doors for the next generation of leaders. When more students see a place for themselves in agriculture, the entire industry becomes stronger, more innovative and better prepared for what's ahead.

**1 in Every 5 AFA
Students are
First Generation**



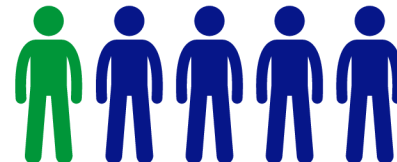
32% of AFA Students
Have Non-Traditional
Ag Majors

Core Competency Corner

This aligns with Cultural EQ by helping students understand, value and lead across diverse perspectives.



**1 in Every 5 AFA
Students Identify
as Non-White**



“A great leadership and professional development opportunity that allows you to be connected to students with similar interests but different backgrounds, bringing new perspectives to light.”

Scott MacGregor, University of Florida

“Valent enjoys connecting with all the attendees and collaborating on future innovations that will shape our industry.”

Matt Plitt, President & CEO Valent

Who We Connect.

Strengthening agriculture requires meaningful connection between emerging leaders and the professionals shaping the industry today. When students interact with industry partners, they gain career clarity, professional confidence and a stronger understanding of how their skills fit into real agricultural challenges. At the same time, industry professionals benefit by investing in future talent, sharing current workforce needs and helping develop students who are prepared to lead, innovate and serve agriculture.

3,452 Volunteer Hours Recorded in 2025

Industry Engagements in 2025 **938**

Core Competency Corner

This aligns with Relationship Development because connections build trust, expand networks and create beneficial pathways.



114 Partner Organizations



LEARN MORE ABOUT PARTNERSHIPS

Meet Our Board.



Megan Nash
VP, Member Engagement
& Business Development
International Fresh
Produce Association



Scott Bormann
Senior Vice President,
North America Operations
Merck Animal Health



Brett Caplice
V.P. – North American
Food Solutions
Bunge North America



Jon Chase
V.P. of Marketing & Shared
Services for Ag & Turf
John Deere



Deacue Fields
V.P. of Agriculture
University of Arkansas
Division of Agriculture



Jarrod Gillig
President, Business
Operations and Supply
Chain, Cargill



Rachel Giannini
Global V.P., Talent
ACCO Corporation



Scott Kay
V.P. U.S. Crop
BASF



Kate Lambert
Senior V.P., Marketing
Farm Credit



Joel Mathiowetz
Mathiowetz Family Farms



Matt Plitt
President and CEO
Valent



Adrianna Ratterman
V.P., US Eastern Cornbelt
Commercial Unit
Corteva Agriscience



Katie Robertson
V.P. – Customer
Experience Activation
Lead, Bayer



Jessi Sletten
V.P., Human Resources
CHS, Inc.



Julie Sexton
Senior V.P. and Chief
Human Resources Officer
Land O'Lakes, Inc.



Chris Skaggs
Associate Vice Chancellor
for Stakeholder Relations
and Associate Dean for
Student Development,
College of Agriculture and
Life Sciences
Texas A&M University



Jenny Spurgeon
Managing Director Global
Agriculture Practice Group
Chair, Global Prairie



Mark Stewart
CEO, Agriculture Future
of America



Manda Tweten
President, Strategic
Customers
ADM

LIFETIME MEMBERS



Sandy Kemper
Chair and Founder
C2FO



J. Mariner Kemper
Chair and CEO
UMB Financial Corp.



L. Joshua Sosland
President, Sosland
Publishing Company



Russ Weathers
V.P., U.S. Government
Relations International
Fresh Produce Association

“The AFA organization has found a calling in connecting young students to the people, opportunities and experiences that will impact them and everyone they serve for decades to come.”

Kate Lambert, Senior Vice President, Marketing, Farm Credit



JOHN DEERE



Nutrien



FARM CREDIT

syngenta

CNH

FMC

Cargill

BUNGE



CHS



GROWMARK



WILBUR-ELLIS

StoneX



AGDATA



Kubota

zoetis



The
Sosland
Foundation



For a complete list of partners, visit agfuture.org/partners/industry

Leave a legacy that helps future leaders in agriculture, food and natural resources grow, lead and serve.



The Weathers Society

The Weathers Society recognizes individuals who have developed an estate plan or other deferred gift arrangement with AFA to ultimately benefit AFA scholarships, programs and students. The society celebrates commitment to empowering upcoming leaders in the ag and natural resources industries.

WHAT IS PLANNED GIVING?

Planned giving is a win-win. It's the transfer of assets during your lifetime or through your estate plan. This approach may offer tax benefits and usually involves non-liquid assets gifted via will, trust or other planned gift arrangement.

HOW CAN IT BE DONE?

Planned giving is simple, and you don't need to be wealthy to do it. From naming AFA in your will to donating real estate, stocks or even a life insurance policy, there are many easy options. Almost any asset can be part of your planned gift.

WANT TO LEAVE A LEGACY?

Interested in making an impact on the future of agriculture? Need help determining what type of gift you want to give? Contact Brian Friedman, at brian.friedman@agfuture.org or 816-406-1464

AFA is a lifelong organization with access points throughout one's career, from scholarships to industry engagement opportunities.

SCHOLARSHIPS

Scholarships are a crucial part of this mission, providing financial support and unparalleled opportunities for growth and networking. By investing in education and development, we're investing in the future of agriculture.

To date, AFA has awarded more than

\$12.6 Million

in Leader & Academic Scholarships.

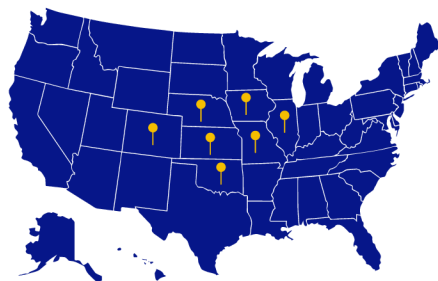
119 AFA Scholarships
were presented
in 2025.

COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

Community partnerships are a collaboration between AFA and a local community to support and develop high-potential students pursuing ag-related careers.

50% of AFA Scholarships Awarded
in 2025 Came from
Community Partnerships.

States with current community partnerships:



LEARN MORE ABOUT
SCHOLARSHIPS

“AFA pushed me out of my comfort zone and helped me see just how many opportunities are in this industry. I loved getting to meet new people and learning about the different passions people have nationwide.”

**Savannah Hall, Nebraska College of Technical
Agriculture**





“The smaller group size for Institutes is a great way to step outside of the classroom and connect with fellow agricultural students.”

Sydney Schilling, Iowa State University

AFA Leader Institutes help students step inside the industry, build career clarity and leave ready to lead agriculture forward.

LEADER INSTITUTES

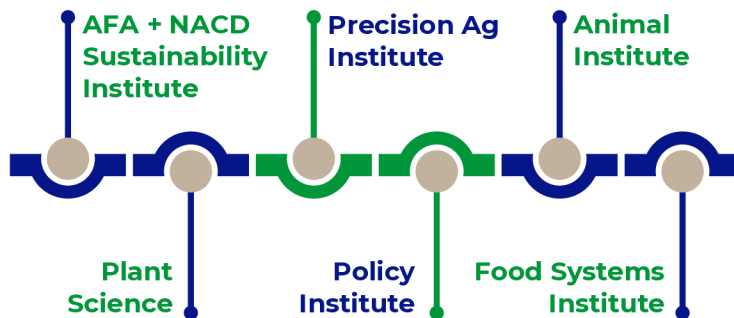
Leader Institutes are immersive, career-focused experiences that give college students a deeper look into the opportunities shaping food and agriculture. Through industry tours, professional networking, skill-building sessions and real-world conversations with leaders in the field, students gain clarity, confidence and connections that help them see where they fit and how they can lead. Each Institute is designed to open doors, expand perspective and prepare emerging talent to make a meaningful impact across the agriculture industry.

Core Competency Corner

This aligns with Career Management because students explore careers, build confidence and make informed decisions about their future.



SIX INDUSTRY SPECIFIC EXPERIENCES



71 Hands-on and Immersive Leadership & Career Tours
345 Students Experienced Institutes in 2025

“Everyone I met, whether an industry professional or delegate, was extremely welcoming and created a great environment.”

Riley Abernathy, Purdue University



AFA Leaders Conference helps students build the skills, confidence and connections to lead with purpose in agriculture and food.

LEADERS CONFERENCE

AFA Leaders Conference is a four-day experience designed to help college students grow as professionals, build meaningful connections and explore the future of agriculture and food. Through year-specific Tracks, students strengthen AFA's six core leader competencies: Relationship Development, Collaboration, Career Management, Cultural EQ, Interpersonal IQ and Systems Thinking.

Delegates gain practical training in areas like time management, goal setting and career exploration while learning directly from industry leaders and peers. By completing assessments before and after Conference, students also have the opportunity to earn a Leaders Conference Badge reflecting growth, proficiency and commitment to lifelong learning.



1,608 Applications
in 2025

815 Delegates
in 2025

519 Industry Members
Engaged in 2025

186 Companies
Engaged in 2025



DATA SHOWS

99%

**OF LEADERS CONFERENCE
DELEGATES REPORT GROWTH IN
AT LEAST ONE KEY SOFT SKILL
FOR EARLY CAREER SUCCESS.**



CELEBRATING BRIDGE BUILDERS

The AFA Bridge Builder Award honors an exceptional AFA alum, eligible through peer nomination, who continues to stay engaged with the organization while making meaningful contributions to their career, community and the agriculture, food and natural resources industries. Inspired by the poem “The Bridge Builder” by Will Allen Dromgoole, this award reflects AFA’s mission to create lasting connections that inspire, uplift and strengthen the future.

In 2025, AFA recognized Elizabeth Galbreath, Professional Development Program Manager at BASF, as the Bridge Builder Award recipient. An AFA alum and champion for connection in food and ag, Elizabeth exemplifies the spirit of mentorship, service and industry impact that this award was created to celebrate.

“Bridge Builders are generous with their time and resources, knowing that what they do today is a long-term investment in the future.”

Elizabeth Galbreath, BASF

AFA is a lifelong community that keeps alumni connected to relationships and meaningful ways to grow and give back.

A LIFELONG ORGANIZATION

AFA alumni are part of a lifelong, values-driven network that uniquely connects emerging talent, engaged alumni, and industry leaders, providing ongoing opportunities for leadership development, career advancement and meaningful impact across agriculture and food systems.

ENGAGEMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Whether you want to grow professionally, build your network or give back, AFA provides meaningful opportunities to stay engaged.

**DISCOVER
ENGAGEMENT
OPPORTUNITIES**



NATIONAL AFA ALLIANCE ADVISORY COUNCIL



Mark Avilla
Council Chair +
Operations Manager
Avilla Ranch



Amanda Martin, Ph.D.
Council Vice Chair + Pres. &
CEO IL Ag Leadership
Foundation



Loren King
Digital Marketing
Supervisor, AI + Insights
MorganMyers



Max Hagaman
Industry and Alumni Liaison
NC State Department of Food,
Bioprocessing and Nutrition Sciences



Elizabeth Gunter
Program Manager,
Competency Program
Design & Execution AFA



Sydney Smith
Sr. Marketing Strategist
Nutrien Ag Solutions



Nick Tarleton
Lead, Operations & Strategy
and Chief of Staff
McDonald's Corporation



Kate Jaeger
Account Manager -
Aftermarket and Customer
Support John Deere



Luke Altermatt
Sales Manager
Cargill



Michael Carlson, Ph.D.
Golf & Turf Data Manager
Ecorobotix

AFA is expanding beyond programs to build a national ecosystem of leaders, partners and alumni with the influence to shape the industry.

BUILDING A MOVEMENT

Through the Magnetic Ag newsletter, the Cultivating Leaders Podcast, CORE Synergy and the Next Level Ag experience, AFA is building a broader ecosystem of connection, learning and leadership development. These platforms extend AFA's impact into everyday conversations, cross-organization collaboration and new spaces for growth, helping shape a stronger, more connected talent pipeline for agriculture.

MAGNETIC AG

Magnetic Ag delivers top ag news with sharp insight and a side of wit, right where you want it.

20,000+ Subscribers

THE CULTIVATING LEADERS PODCAST

The Cultivating Leaders Podcast delivers practical tools and real conversations to help leaders grow.

3,000+ Listeners to Date

CORE SYNERGY

CORE Synergy brings AFA, MANRRS and BASF to empower the next generation of ag leaders.



NEXT LEVEL AG

Next Level Ag helps early- to mid-career talent grow the confidence and influence to shape the future.

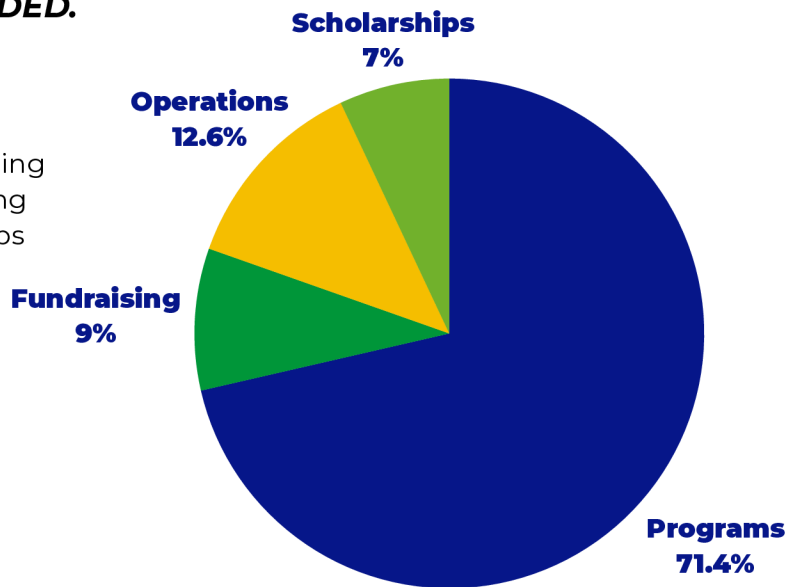
21 Pilot Participants
in 2025

Your support makes it possible for AFA to connect young leaders with the resources, relationships and opportunities to shape the future.

EVERY DOLLAR COUNTS

AFA IS 97% PHILANTHROPICALLY FUNDED.

A gift to AFA helps open doors for the next generation of agriculture leaders. Your support makes leadership development, scholarships, innovation and continued growth possible, helping AFA expand its reach and respond to the evolving needs of students and industry. Every dollar helps prepare leaders who are ready to meet the moment and shape what comes next.



**GIVE A
GIFT TODAY**





By 2040, AFA is working to ensure every college student in the U.S. can access the resources and opportunities to lead agriculture.

THE BRIDGE TO WHAT'S NEXT

As AFA celebrates 30 years of impact, we are building the bridge to the next 30 with a bold vision for the future of agriculture. By 2040, our Moonshot is for every college student in the United States to have access to AFA resources and opportunities. To get there, AFA is expanding and evaluating programs to stay ahead of industry trends, working alongside partners to meet evolving workforce needs and growing our reach across more regions, colleges and universities nationwide. We are also embracing responsible technology, deepening student guidance around industry expectations and intentionally strengthening alumni engagement so every person touched by AFA remains connected to a lifelong community. This next chapter is building the ecosystem of leaders, partners and alumni who will shape the future of agriculture.



**We build bridges for young leaders,
fostering engagement and
innovation in food and agriculture.**

